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Wings of Silver

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BY

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WINGS

I live in every sentient thing.
    Aye, what am I?—
The force that stirs the bird to sing,
    And bids it fly;
The urge within the grey cocoon
    To swell, and rend
The prison-walls; the ceaseless croon,—
    "Life hath no end!"

The pulse within the seed that breaks
    The shrivelled shell;
The thrill in bud, till bloom awakes;
    The clarion bell
That calls the soul of Man to rise;
    The power that flings
Off shackles of the flesh, and cries,—
    "Behold thy wings!"

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BIRDS OF PASSAGE

From the North where the snows come sweeping,
To the South where poppies glow;
Thy changeless course thou'rt keeping,
Unswerved by winds that blow.
From the South to the North aquiver
With awakened life, thou dost wing
Thy flight over plain and river,—
At the whispered call of Spring.
With unwavering purpose thou hiest,
Untiring, through leagues of air;
Ne'er doubting thy wings, thou fliest,
Content—for thou knowest where.

Blest birds of passage, oh, teach me:—
Life's soft inner call to obey,
To turn where death's blight cannot reach me,
And keep to my course each day;
To press on, nor faint—never drifting;
Trusting my invincible soul,—
The wings that, unfailing, are lifting;—
At peace with Life—knowing my goal.

OMNIPRESENCE

Borne on the air by surging wings,—
    Above, below, about, around,—
Up, up he soars and blithely sings;
    Nor fears the ground.

Covered by waters, 'neath, above,
    He lives and knows the sea as all;
Nor doubts he of the deeps of Love,
    Nor fears to fall.

Compassed by Love, man lives and basks
    In sunshine blest; but sleeps a clod,
And breathes Him, dwells in Him—yet asks:—
    Where, where is God?

FAITH

Drop by drop that never ceasing falls,
Water wears its way through granite walls;
Thought by thought that, conscious of its power,
Goes forth from the heart each day, each hour,—
Love shall conquer every hate-born breath,
Life Eternal triumph over death.
Step by step that ever tends to rise,
Man shall scale the heights of Paradise;
Prayer by prayer that knows all might is given,
Man shall win through fleshly bars—to Heaven.

THE SONG OF THE STARS

On, on we roll through trackless space
While centuries sweep by,
Each in our own appointed place
In God's eternal sky.
Immortal Man, sleep-bound on earth,
The Mind that guides us gave thee birth.
Obey in awe
Life's changeless law!

The Hand that holds us in our course,—
Omnipotent, Divine,
Omniscient Love, Life's only source,—
Created thee sublime.
The stars shall fade and cease to be;
But Man reflects Infinity.
Through space afar,
Star echoes star:—

O Quenchless Flame,
To thee we bow.
Awake, Man! Claim
Thy birthright now;
Life calls thy name,—
God's image thou!

Fore'er we sing
As on we roll,
Of Life the King,—
Man's deathless soul.

Eternal harmony is thine;
Obey God's law—arise, and shine!

LIFE AND I

Life came to me at Morning;
(And oh, his eyes were kind!)
With flowers my head adorning;
But I was blind.
With tender care he laid me
In Love's uplifted arms,
That gently held and stayed me
Through all alarms.

We quarreled—Life and I—one day,
Because he took the arms away,—
Yet then it was I learned to pray.

Life came to me at Nooning,
And scattered roses red;
But when soft winds blew crooning,
They all lay dead.
With tears and wild upbraiding,
I railed at Life and Fate,
Nor saw the blooms unfading—
Beside my gate.

We walked estranged then—Life and I—
Because he let the roses die;
Nor wot I of the bending sky.

Life came to me at Gloaming
(And oh, his eyes were blest!)
I knew 'twas time for homing,
For peace and rest.
I took his hand outreaching,
And drew a raptured breath;
When lo—his smile beseeching—
I saw—'twas death.

So Life and I are winging free,
Reclothed—with Immortality;
I loving Life, Life loving me.

THE WEAVERS

Ruthlessly a weaver's hands
    Seized life's silken threads and fair,
Rent, defiled the spotless strands,—
    Wove a texture of Despair.
Men then cursed and called it Fate;
But the weaver's name was—Hate.

Prayerfully a weaver toiled,—
    Seeing only what God meant,—
And from ends all frayed and soiled,
    Wove a fabric of Content.
Hearts were lifted then above;
For the weaver's name was—Love.

THE OPEN DOOR

If so it be that through my open gate
Some thief shall enter and despoil in hate,
Shall quench the fire upon my hearth of trust,
Leave but dead ashes and a barren crust;

Still shall I say 'twere better far that I
Left open, free, my windows to the sky;
That my door stood ajar by night and day,
My gate outflung to Angels by the way.

For oh, one morn before my leaping fire,
I met the eyes of Truth, and list the lyre
Across whose strings the hands of Seraphs swept,
The while my heart its Heavenly music kept.

And often have I bound with tender care
The thorn-rent feet of strayed ones, pausing where
My door stood wide—a refuge from the night;
And sent them singing, to ascend the height.

Let enter then who will, my heart stands open wide;
I've thrown away the key, nor fear what may betide.
I could not bear to think one sought me with a prayer
In vain,—that Hope should sadly turn away—
Despair.

So would I ope my door, e'en though some fiend
might slay,—
Lest Truth should find it barred, or Love be
turned away.

THE WEB OF DREAMS

He wove, and a Web of Dreams unrolled,—
The warp was Fame and the woof was Gold.
Oh, the joy he spent,
And the hearts he rent,
As he wove his fabric of Discontent,
And it fell at his feet soiled fold on fold!

For the threads were frail and tangled and frayed,
As he wove of Self and the things that fade.
Oh, the tears he shed
As his years lay dead,
And he spurned with hate each tattered shred
Of the worthless web his hands had made!

But the Master Weaver heard his prayer,
And plied the shuttle with wondrous care.
Oh, the threads that flew,
And the fabric new,—
The warp was Love and the woof Love too,—
That came from the loom, so strong and fair!

Then the weaver of dreams awoke—and knew;
And with lifted soul he strove anew.
Oh, the joy he found,
And the hearts he crowned,
As the shuttle sped and the reels unwound;—
For he wove of Love and each thread held true!

FLIGHT

I would sing in the face of fears,
When about my feet they throng;
I would pass them by with a heart that drips
A hymn of joy from my eager lips;
For fear cannot live for long—
With song!

I would lift my eyes to the stars,
Though my path be laid through mire;
And looking up to the Heavenly doors,
My feet shall follow my soul that soars
Up, up—ever high and higher—
Nor tire!

I would open my windows wide,—
When caged seems this heart of mine,—
To the sun and sky and Heaven's wind
sweeping through,
That my soul shall rise till I breast the blue,
And the freedom of Life Divine—
Is mine!

VICTORY

I have fought; but what honor in fighting?—
    There are many who win;
The beasts do as much, even righting
    A wrong that has been.
Yet I rise 'bove the warfare, and clinging
    To Love 'midst the fray,
Bring out of it all a soul singing,
    A heart that can pray.

I have toiled; but why laud for my toiling?—
    There are legions who slave,
Hearts calloused, souls dulled by the moiling
    From cradle to grave.
Yet while wearied with burdens, I'm faring
    Afar—soul awing,
Till my freed spirit soars, and is wearing
    The freshness of Spring.

I have dwelt in the darkness of sorrow;
    Pity not,—neither praise
Because I endured: recks the morrow
    Of dead yesterdays?
Full many weep, seeing no glimmer
    Of Light to be born;
But I smile through the tear-drops that shimmer
    With promise of morn.

So extol me not for my burden,
    My striving, nor pain;
Remember not these,—but the guerdon
    I strove to attain;
That I fought, when needs must,—yet believing
    In Love as man's goal,
And kept sweet 'neath the lash, that is leaving
    No scar on my soul.

INVOCATION TO THE SKY

O Infinite Sky, set my longing
    Adrift on thy turquoise tide,
Till earth's sordid desires that are thronging,
    Are lost in Love's ocean wide.

Wash me white with thy cleansing showers,
    Purge my heart with Heaven's healing dew,
Till I come forth pure as the flowers,
    New-risen in Love—and true.

O'erflow my starved soul with thy beauty,—
    Fair amber and amethyst West,—
Till I quaff from the goblet of duty,
    Love's nectar, immortal and blest.

Break each finite fetter of sorrow,
    Let me weep on Love's bosom wide
Where a dawn awaiteth each morrow,
    And earth's every tear is dried.

Hold me close in thy silence, folding
    My hurt heart there on the breast
Of Infinity, tenderly molding
    My pain to a prayer—and rest.

Still all of my tired heart's yearning
    In thy unfathomed spaces of blue,
Lift me up to thy stars calm-burning,
    Enkindle my spirit anew.

Illume and exalt me, thou tender
Illimitable Sky bending o'er,
Till I lose my dark thoughts in thy splendor,
And finding my soul-pinions—soar.

Loose earth-bonds that seem to enthrall me,
Let me mount in thy measureless dome,
Attuned to Love's voices that call me—
"Soul, free and untrammeled, come home!"

Let me drift through thy starshine, pillowed
On violet velvet shade,
Where the downy cloudlets lie billowed,
At peace in Love's arms—unafraid.

Let me float with thy clouds, soft-sailing,—
As buoyant and glad as they,—
Through thy sapphire sea that's unveiling
The grace of a golden day.

Dear Sky, love me! Fill my appealing
With Love that's eternal—like thee;
Till I sing and rejoice in its healing,
And rise in God's blue—set free!

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